



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

PO BOX 202501
HELENA MT 59620-2501
www.opi.state.mt.us
(406) 444-3095
(888) 231-9393
(406) 444-0169 (TTY)

Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

September 1, 2004

To: OPI MASS Representatives

From: Madalyn Quinlan, Chief of Staff

Subject: Summary of OPI Activities for September 2004

Greetings! Welcome to the start of a new school year. Here is a summary of the current activities at the Office of Public Instruction for September 2004. This summary can also be found at www.opi.state.mt.us/MASSUpdates/. If you would like to be added to a Listserv to receive the Summary of OPI Activities each month, please register at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/regforms/OPIActivities/>.

Office of the State Superintendent

Highlights of State Superintendent Linda McCulloch's Activities for August 2004:

- Addressed the MEA-MFT summer conference, MASS summer conference, Summer Reading Institute, the Montana Conference on Race "Two Worlds: One Path," Northwest Montana Reading Council, and the Helena Head Start professional development day.
- Taped the television show "Aging Horizons" regarding the Honorary High School Diploma program for Veterans
- Met with Montana representatives of Freedom's Answer - the largest youth-led voting campaign
- Attended a luncheon with Senator Max Baucus and Ambassadors from foreign countries visiting Montana
- Read to students at the summer lunch program at Hawthorne Elementary School in Bozeman
- Attended the MEA-MFT Mentoring Institute
- Was a guest on the "Berg in the Morning" radio show with Dave Berg
- Participated in the monthly meetings of the State Land Board and the School Renewal Commission
- Interviewed with newspaper, radio and television reporters on a variety of K-12 issues
- On a personal note...Linda and her husband, Bill, celebrated their 26th wedding anniversary

OPI's Yellow School Bus Tour

Superintendent Linda McCulloch and her staff have a busy fall schedule to visit schools as part of OPI's Yellow School Bus Tour. During September OPI staff will visit schools in Great Falls, Laurel, Red Lodge, Billings and Hardin. And in October the bus will head to Missoula for the day. The purpose of the Yellow School Bus Tour is to listen and learn about the challenges and successes in Montana schools. If you would like your schools to be a part of the Yellow School Bus Tour, contact OPI Tour Coordinator: Jan Lombardi at jlombardi@state.mt.us, 444-1641 or the OPI website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/YellowBusTour/index.html>.

Indian Education Summit: October 15-16, 2004

Superintendent Linda McCulloch is hosting an Indian Education Summit – A Call to Action on October 15-16, 2004 in Helena. Participants will share their expertise and ideas to create an action plan that addresses the challenges facing American Indian students in Montana.

Invitations to the Summit have been sent to educators and leaders from across the state to help close the achievement gap for American Indian students and make Indian Education for All a reality. If you have questions about the Indian Education Summit, please call Deputy Superintendent Bud Williams at 444-5643 or budwilliams@state.mt.us or Anne Pichette at 444-3559 or anpichette@state.mt.us.

Montana K-12 Public School Renewal Commission

The final meeting of the School Renewal Commission will be September 8, 2004 in Helena at the State Capitol. Information regarding membership, meetings and resources is available on the web: <http://www.discoveringmontana.com/gov2/css/boards/renewal/default.asp>. Contact: Loran Frazier, Education Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor, at 406-444-5665 or lofrazier@state.mt.us. OPI Contact: Madalyn Quinlan, mquinlan@state.mt.us or 406-444-3168.

September 2004 Board of Public Education Meeting Topics

The Board of Public Education will hold its next regular meeting September 9-10, 2004, in the Lewis and Clark Room of Matthews Hall at the UM-Western campus, Dillon, Montana. Agenda items from the Office of Public Instruction include the following information items: the Superintendent's Report and updates on Assessment, No Child Left Behind, and Teacher Education. Action items include an Accreditation Report and License Suspension or Revocation decisions. Contacts are Board of Public Education Executive Secretary Steve Meloy (406) 444-0300 or Deputy Superintendent Bud Williams (406) 444-7325.

American Indian Heritage Day: September 24, 2004

Indians have called the area that is now known as Montana home for many generations. Montana's Indian tribes have a rich history and culture, unique to each individual tribe. The state constitution acknowledges the contribution of Montana's Indian tribes to the heritage of our state by "...recognizing the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians..." The constitution goes on to say that the state "...is committed in its educational goals the preservation of their cultural integrity." Montana lawmakers have passed legislation to affirm the state's commitment to the preservation of the culture and history of Montana's Indian tribes. In 1997, the Montana Legislature designated the fourth Friday of September as "American Indian Heritage Day."

In 1999, the Montana Legislature passed into law MCA 20-1-501, "Indian Education for All". The law clarifies the purpose of the constitutional amendment. The obligation to follow through with the 1972 Constitutional Committee's intent is spelled out in this landmark legislation. Indian Education for All states that..."Every Montanan, whether Indian or non-Indian, be encouraged to learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner..."

It is our hope that Montana's schools take the initiative to teach about Montana's Indian's beyond just one day in September. However, schools can use this day as a starting point for inclusion of teaching about the Assiniboiné, Sioux, Gros Ventre, Chippewa, Cree, Blackfeet, Salish, Kootenai, Crow, Northern Cheyenne and Little Shell tribes. We encourage educators who are looking for resources for teaching about Montana's Indians to look at OPI's Indian Education webpage, available at: www.opi.state.mt.us/IndianEd/. OPI Contact: Everall Fox, Indian Education Specialist for the OPI, efox@state.mt.us or (406) 444-3013.

2004 Montana Educator's Forum: October 1, 2004

Polling data continually shows that educators are amongst the most trusted and reliable sources for information about issues affecting education. The problem is educators do not always have the time, opportunity, or the skills to educate others about the critical issues facing their profession. That is why this year's forum is all about "Building an Education Team." Participants will learn about effective educational partnerships and outreach efforts that have brought parents, trustees, educators, business leaders, policy makers, and community members together to enrich the learning experiences of students. Educators know that to ensure the highest quality public schools, we cannot do it alone. We must reach out to engage the community around us.

The keynote speaker for this year's forum will be Barb Kelley, past chair of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. A retired physical education teacher from Maine, Ms. Kelley has dedicated her professional life to working with numerous business, government, and teacher organizations to improve teaching and learning in America.

The Montana Educator Forum is an annual program of the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation. Limited to 200 participants, the Forum was created to bring professional educators together with Montana policy leaders and opinion makers to discuss critical issues in teaching and learning.

This year's forum will take place on Friday, October 1, 2004, starting at 8:00 am at the Red Lion Colonial Inn in Helena. For registration forms or for more information, please contact Shirley Chovanak at the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation at 406/442-4250.

Scholarships Available to Pursue National Board Certification

MEA-MFT and the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation (MPTF) are pleased to announce that an additional allocation of National Board Certification Candidate scholarships is available for this school year. Therefore, if you have ever thought about pursuing National Board Certification for Teachers, this is the year to do it! There are already 8 Montana teachers who have signed on to pursue this notable distinction during the coming school year. You can now join them! The scholarships will cover up to \$1150 of the \$2,300 certification fee for Montana teachers. Remember, the state of Montana provides a one-time professional stipend of \$3,000 for those who attain National Board Certification. In addition, over 10 Montana districts now offer salary stipends and/or additional compensation for National Board Certified teachers. To learn more about National Board Certification, visit the following link www.mea-mft.org/nbcnew.htm, or contact Erik Burke, Director of Public Policy, MEA-MFT, 406/447-1462, eburke@mea-mft.org

Directory of Montana Schools is Available

The 2004-2005 Directory of Montana Schools is posted on the OPI Web page at www.opi.state.mt.us/Directory/ Also, printed copies are available from:

Allegra Print & Imaging
40 W Lawrence St, Suite E
Helena, MT 59601-5083
(406) 449-2847
Fax: (406) 449-7860
\$9.75 per copy (includes shipping and handling)

Pilot Project for Videoconferencing

The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is working in coordination with VisionNet and MetNet on a pilot project for videoconferencing from the OPI to Montana school districts. The OPI will be

installing videoconferencing equipment and is planning to conduct a pilot project from October 1, 2004, through May 31, 2005. During the pilot, the OPI will provide a variety of video conferences focusing on pertinent topics ranging from federal program requirements to emerging education issues. A calendar of events will be posted on the OPI Web site in order to notify districts and individuals of the videoconferences. The OPI will be evaluating the content delivered, participation by districts and the overall effectiveness. As details become available, information will be disseminated through the OPI Official E-Mail and the MASS meetings. OPI Contact: Gale Kramlick, (406) 444-4411, gkramlick@state.mt.us.

Stay Connected to OPI Official E-mail

OPI uses its Official E-mail service as its primary vehicle for communicating with school district offices. September is a good time to remind school administrators and technology staff to make sure that your Official E-mail service is updated to best serve your district. In order to set-up and maintain the e-mail service, districts must log onto their Official Email Account, and update the district e-mail address(es) to which the OPI messages will be forwarded. If this list is not updated when your district e-mail addresses change, the communication link will be broken. To forward the messages from your OPI account to your district email accounts, follow the instructions provided at <http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/autoforward.html>. If you have any questions or need a computer, please contact our METNET Help Desk at 444-1626.

Want to Review the E-mails Sent to Your District by OPI this Past Summer?

Here's the link: http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/Official_Mail/. Note the arrows to move to next and previous pages on the right side (upper third) of the Official Mail page.

News on Electronic Reporting to OPI: User Names and Passwords

In mid-June, OPI mailed to districts the User Names and passwords that districts will need to access the OPI Internet Reporting and Information Service (IRIS) on the Web. Due to Montana State security requirements, passwords will automatically change every two months on the first day of the month. These user names and passwords provide the user with access to all IRIS programs, including the upcoming Annual Data Collection and MAEFAIRS Fall Enrollment reporting. If you lose your letter, you may request an additional copy of the letter to be sent to your central office. No passwords will be given out over the phone or via e-mail. Please contact OPI at 444-3448 if you need assistance with IRIS user names or passwords.

Annual Data Collection

Each year in October, school districts in Montana submit information to the Office of Public Instruction through the Annual Data Collection (ADC). Through the ADC reporting process, OPI collects essential information from school districts on school personnel and teaching assignments, district calendars, disaggregated enrollment and attendance, non-public school enrollment, dropout data, numbers of gifted students, and numbers of Limited English Proficient students. Packets with the ADC information will be mailed to district offices on September 3.

Training for the Annual Data Collection

- OPI has scheduled hands-on training for New Users at four locations in September. The trainings will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

September 10 Helena, OPI Training Room, 1227 11th Avenue

September 13 Malta High School, South 9th Street W

September 14 Billings Senior HS, 425 Grand Avenue, Room 204

September 15 Butte High School, 401 S Wyoming

To register on-line for the New Users Training, go to
<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/RegForms/ADCTraining/ADCTraining.html>

- For users who are familiar with the Annual Data Collection data and formats, OPI will offer video-on-demand training. You will be able to watch this training from your computer at your convenience. The video training will be available by September 10 at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/adc/Index.html>. If you do not already have QuickTime software on your computer, you will need to download QuickTime to view the video training. Instructions will be provided on the OPI website for accessing the video training.

Improved Performance of the ADC Electronic System

OPI has made a concerted effort to improve the speed and performance of the Annual Data Collection programs for 2004. OPI software development staff has redesigned the programs and database queries. We think that you will be pleased with the results. The redesigned system runs faster with fewer processing steps. In addition, OPI network staff has provided a way to save all ADC reports as PDF files, thereby eliminating the need to print over the Internet. Reports saved on your computer can be printed locally or e-mailed to others.

New ADC Report Forms for 2004-2005

Please be aware that several new report forms have been added to the Annual Data Collection this year. These include

- **Five Year Comprehensive Plan Effectiveness Report**
- Indian Education for All
- Distance Learning
- Alternative Education Programs
- **Disaggregated Enrollment and Attendance**
- Technology Use Report
- Testing Coordinator Contact Information

ADC: Disaggregated Enrollment and Attendance

Please take note of the Disaggregated Enrollment and Attendance data collection. For the first time, OPI is asking school districts to report student enrollment and attendance by the same disaggregation categories or subgroups that are used for reporting under No Child Left Behind. In addition to reporting enrollment by grade, gender and race/ethnicity (as you have in the past), you will be asked to further disaggregate by reporting the number of students with disabilities, students eligible for Free & Reduced Lunch, migrant students, and Limited English Proficient students. This fall, schools will continue to report total enrollments into the MAEFAIRS system. The fall enrollment count you report in the MAEFAIRS system will need to be submitted to OPI before you submit the disaggregated enrollment totals. The totals reported by grade between the two systems will be required to match.

ADC: Effectiveness Report for the Five-Year Comprehensive Education Plans (5YCEP)

Montana districts and schools are to be commended for all their efforts during the initial phases of the 5YCEP process! The over-arching goal of the 5YCEP and the new yearly effectiveness reports for those plans is to provide schools and districts with a "living" roadmap for continuous improvement. Research continues to show overwhelmingly that a quality continuous improvement model must be in place if a district's or school's ongoing efforts to improve student achievement is to be successful. In addition, districts and schools identified for improvement under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) are required to be operating under such a model. Montana is a step ahead of that requirement as we already have all districts and schools operating under a continuous improvement model – our 5YCEP process.

Also, under the small school process required by NCLB, each year the OPI is called upon to make the necessary adequate yearly progress determinations for those small schools not covered by the NCLB calculated process. Developed last year, that small school process has the peer review teams analyze the overall completeness and thoroughness of the 5YCEP. Beginning this year, they will be looking at the completeness and thoroughness of the annual effectiveness reports for the 5YCEP as well.

Finally, the OPI will also be looking at a number of options for reviewing the annual effectiveness reports in general and will be seeking input from the field to assist in that effort. Such input is critical as we continue to work with our educational partners in districts and schools across the state to fulfill the vision of making continuous education improvement an integral part of the educational process in Montana under 10.55.601, ARM.

Children's Health Insurance Program – Back to School Enrollment

During the months of August and September, an effort is being made in Montana to inform families about low-cost and free health care coverage programs for children. Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies - The Montana Coalition in Partnership with Covering Kids and Families is launching its annual Back-to-school enrollment drive. This initiative encourages parents of uninsured children to enroll in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) or other low cost or free health care coverage programs a top priority on their back-to-school checklists.

Many families are not aware that their children may qualify for coverage. In Montana, a family of four can earn up to \$28,275 a year or more and qualify for CHIP. Eligibility is based on family size income. While the number of enrollees is limited and a waiting list currently receive are added every month. In Montana applicants on the waiting list currently receive coverage within a few months and all families are encourages to apply to determine eligibility.

As you prepare for the new school year, please add the Back-to-School enrollment drive as part of your activities. Help us provide information to parents so they can take the steps necessary to get their children enrolled in a health care program. For more information, contact Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies at 1-800-421-6667 or email Mike Cooney at mcooney@hmhb-mt.org to order free materials or if you have any questions. If you would like to learn more about Covering Kids and Families, please visit www.coveringkids.org.

Education Licensure

State Superintendent Linda McCulloch is pleased to announce that Elizabeth Keller has been hired as OPI's Director of Education Licensure. Elizabeth replaces Margaret Bowles in this position. Margaret has accepted a new position as OPI's Accreditation Accountability specialist. Elizabeth can be reached at 406-444-2580.

Assessment

The August 2004 issue of JUMP, the OPI online assessment newsletter, is online at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/Assessment/NewsLetters/Aug04AssessNews.pdf>. The JUMP newsletter contains important information about the testing windows for the statewide assessments in 2004-2005, upcoming training opportunities, the revision of the CRT-Alternate, and the release of statewide test results in September and November. Please make sure that your district test coordinator reviews the JUMP newsletter. OPI Contact: Judy Snow, 444-3656, jsnow@state.mt.us.

School Budgeting and Accounting

October 4 Enrollment Count

The Fall Enrollment Count date is Monday, October 4, 2004. Students enrolled in the district on that date must be reported to OPI. Information about ANB and instructions for entering the report on the MAEFAIRS electronic system are posted at: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/SchoolFinance/Enrollment.html>. Contact Tal Redpath at redpath@state.mt.us or 444-3024.

"10 Day Rule"

A district may not count a student as enrolled if that student has been absent, with or without excuse, for 11 consecutive school days immediately preceding and including the official count dates (October 4, 2004 and February 1, 2005). Even if the student has not missed 10 days as of the count date, a district cannot count the student if: 1) the student has enrolled in another district; OR 2) the district has received notice verbally or in writing that the student will no longer be attending; OR 3) the student had records transferred to another school; OR 4) the student is otherwise unable to continue attendance (death, detention, etc.) (ARM 10.20.102) OPI Contact: Tal Redpath, (406) 444-3024, or redpath@state.mt.us.

Job Corps and ANB

Under a law passed in 2001, MCA 20-9-707 allows ANB for the resident district of a student who attends a Montana job corps program at Anaconda, Ronan, or Darby. To claim ANB, students must be enrolled in the resident district and the district must have an interlocal agreement with the job corps. For more information, contact Tal Redpath at (406) 444-3024 or redpath@state.mt.us.

FY 2004-05 Final Budgets due September 13

The FY 2003-04 Trustees' Financial Summary (TFS) and FY 2004-05 Final Budgets are due to OPI by September 13 (2nd Monday in September). Contact Nica Carte at (406) 444-4401 or ncarte@state.mt.us.

Contract Soon for FY 2003-04 Audits

If you haven't already done so, please contact your auditor soon to arrange an audit of FY 2003-04. School districts that spent more than \$300,000 of Federal assistance last year, including USDA commodities, must submit an "A-133" (aka "Federal") audit report for FY 2003-04 to OPI by March 31, 2005.

Districts that spend less than \$300,000 of Federal assistance must have a "regular" audit and submit a report to OPI within one year of the close of the fiscal year (i.e., FY 2003-04 audits are due to OPI by June 30, 2005). Very small districts with less than \$200,000 of total revenues in all funds combined must have an audit "review" every four years upon OPI request. OPI Contact: Mike Waterman, (406) 444-4524, or mwaterman@state.mt.us.

Approved Bus Routes

Please remind bus drivers—Buses must be driven on routes as approved by the county transportation committee. Routes must not be altered without the county transportation committee's approval. Running alternative routes without approval may result in state and county overpayments that are subject to refund. Altering routes might also expose the district to unnecessary liability risks. OPI contact: Maxine Mougeot, (406) 444-3096 or mmougeot@state.mt.us.

FY 2004-05 Bus Route Forms

TR-1 Bus Route Forms are due to the County Superintendent by October 1 and to OPI by October 15.

- 1) Forms were pre-filled with last year's bus information and posted at <http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/0000D9D9-80000007/00017A9B-80000007/>.
- 2) Blank forms are under <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PupilTransport/index.html>
- 3) An optional OPI form (TR-2) is available to help track students on each route, <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/pupiltransport/TR-2.pdf>. OPI contact: Maxine Mougeot, (406) 444-3096 or mmougeot@state.mt.us.

10 Hours per Year Bus Driver Training Requirement

Standards adopted by the Board of Public Education in 2002 require a minimum of 10 hours of training for school bus drivers each year. This includes substitute drivers. Each district must design and implement a training program using the guidelines and requirements found in the 2003 Yellow School Bus Standards. <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/pupiltransport/busstds.pdf>

OPI has a variety of videos on bus driving techniques and bus safety issues that are available for district use. The video listing and various bus driver training opportunities across the state are listed at: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PupilTransport/index.html#train> OPI contact: Maxine Mougeot, (406) 444-3096 or mmougeot@state.mt.us.

Information Services Division

School Computer Program

The School Computer Program has many FREE computer monitors available with screen sizes from 17 to 21 inches. For more information, contact Scott Buswell at SBuswell@state.mt.us

OPI Publications On-line

All of OPI's publications published in PDF are now online at the OPI website. Click on the following link to access the collection: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/DocSearch.htm>

Department of Education Services

Approved Provider Annual Report Update

The OPI Department of Education Services staff is updating approved providers of renewal units for educator licensure. The providers will serve for the next project period, July 1, 2004 - June 30, 2005. This new information will be updated to the OPI Web page at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/EdSvs/Index.html> to reflect the renewal unit activities of the approved providers.

In addition, two new items have been updated to the OPI Web page:

- The renewal unit approvals and approved provider forms are now available as forms that can be filled in electronically; and
- The Application for Individual Professional Development Activities as Eligible for the Award of Renewal Units has a new column for entering the Academic Area of the in-service. The academic areas are provided on an attached page to the application.

We appreciate your assistance in providing approved renewal units for educators' licenses! If you haven't registered your school district as an approved provider for this year, it isn't too late to apply. OPI Contacts: Nancy Coopersmith, (406) 444-5541, ncoopersmith@state.mt.us Carol Gneckow, (406) 444-2417, e-mail, cgneckow@state.mt.us.

United States Senate Youth Scholarship Program

High school juniors and seniors who meet the eligibility criteria listed below are encouraged to participate in the United States Senate Youth Scholarship Program for 2004-05. Two Montana students and a first and second alternate will be selected to participate in the Annual Senate Youth Scholarship Program. The top two Montana students will receive a \$5,000 college scholarship and a one-week, all expense paid trip to Washington, DC, February 26-March 5, 2005.

Applicants must:

- be a junior or graduating senior in a Montana high school;
- be elected to a student government office or have been a Boys/Girls State Delegate for the 2004-05 school year;
- be actively involved in the school and community;
- be a permanent resident of the United States; and
- be a Montana resident.

Interested students should see their high school counselors to sign up for the qualifying exam given in October. Potential awardees compete for this scholarship by taking a 50-point exam on current politics, American History, and the U.S. Constitution. The top ten scorers are then required to record videotaped responses to a set of questions provided by the Office of Public Instruction, U.S. Senate Youth Program staff. Two delegates and two alternates are chosen from the ten semifinalists. The result of this competition will be forwarded and the William Randolph Hearst Foundation will announce winners in December. For more information contact Carol Gneckow, Office of Public Instruction, (406) 444-2417 or e-mail, cgneckow@state.mt.us or visit the Web page <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/scholarships/index.html>.

Accreditation Division

Food for the Mind Project

The Office of Public Instruction, in partnership with School Nutrition, Montana State University-Bozeman Team Nutrition project, Eat Right Montana, and the Montana State Reading Council developed the Food for the Mind project for K-3 classrooms to promote reading between parents and children, using nutrition and physical activity as the topic area. The project supports Superintendent McCulloch's reading initiative. It also supports the public health initiative to reduce childhood obesity by increasing knowledge and activity within the young child and family target population. It also strives to engage parents with their children's attachment to school, and increases family knowledge about the importance of reading and healthy eating and physical activity.

The kindergarten through grade three classroom boxes include two book bags, books on health, nutrition and fitness topics, a teacher booklet, a teacher book, and student consumable packages. A limited number of Food for the Mind classroom boxes are available on a first-come basis. For information or to register for the book bag project, please contact June Atkins, Literacy Specialist, (406) 444-3664 or e-mail, jatkins@state.mt.us or Monique Webb, project assistant, (406) 444-9864 or e-mail, mowebb@state.mt.us.

Learn and Serve America Homeland Security Grant, Citizen Preparedness Through Youth Leadership

The Office of Public Instruction, in partnership with the University of Montana's Division of Educational Research Services (DERS), received a two-year grant which engages young

people in service-learning activities that will address school and community safety and security issues. The grant involves students in disaster preparation and planning while increasing their knowledge and understanding of how service-learning can play a meaningful role in the field of homeland security. Outcomes of the Citizen Preparedness through Youth Leadership (CPTYL) project will be increased youth leadership and citizenship skills, integration of service-learning concepts and strategies, and emergency and disaster plans into the academic curriculum aligned to the Montana Content and Performance Standards and the Districts' Five-Year Comprehensive Education Plan. Replicable rural homeland security models for schools and communities will be developed and disseminated.

The CPTYL project, with training from DERS, will engage students in service-learning activities that include needs assessments and technology training including Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and will enable students and community members to develop community-wide emergency/disaster preparedness plans. Six communities with current service-learning projects will participate in the project. The six sites include Hardin, Lockwood (Billings), Plentywood, Lewistown, Missoula, and Libby. For further information contact June Atkins, Learn and Serve Director, (406) 444-3664 or jatkins@state.mt.us.

Special Education Division

A reminder to schools: For students with disabilities who are living in your district, regardless of where the parents live, your district has the responsibility to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE). 10.16.3122, ARM speaks to this requirement. This situation arises on occasion and we want to make clear your responsibilities. If you have any questions, contact Tim Harris at 406-444-5664, or via email at tharris@state.mt.us.

Educational Opportunity and Equity Division

New hires to focus on Indian Education and Dropout Prevention

OPI is pleased to announce that Indian Education will benefit from the services of two highly qualified educators in recent changes in the Office. Everall Fox has accepted the position of Indian Education Specialist, and Mike Jetty has accepted the position of American Indian Dropout Prevention Specialist. Everall Fox is the former Gear UP Specialist at OPI who assumed his duties as Indian Education Specialist on August 30. Everall can be reached at 44-3013 or efox@state.mt.us. Mike Jetty will assume his position on September 9. His contact information will be mjetty@state.mt.us, telephone number to be determined. As part of his duties, Mike will coordinate statewide dropout prevention activities and the management of the OPI Dropout Prevention grant. As part of this transition, Lori Falcon, the former Indian Education Specialist, will continue to work on dropout prevention activities with Browning, Heart Butte, Box Elder and Rocky Boy on a part-time basis on-site at Browning for the next several months.

GEAR UP Fall Conference

September 20-21, 2004

Red Lion Colonial Inn, Helena, MT.

Contact: Sandy Merdinger, Montana GEAR UP Director, (406) 444-0317, smerdinger@oche.montana.edu

School Discipline Data Collection

This is a collection of school discipline data that includes all incidents that occur between July 1, 2004, and June 30, 2005, and:

- result in an out-of-school suspension or expulsion, regardless of the length of time, for any enrolled student; or

- Involve weapons, drugs or violence in which the perpetrator is a non-student (someone not enrolled in the school such as a former student who has graduated or dropped out, or someone unknown to the school).

School districts are strongly encouraged to submit school discipline data electronically through the OPI's Internet Reporting and Information Services (IRIS). The application will be available to school districts starting the middle of September 2004 and will stay open until the due date for submittal of June 30, 2005. The data entry screen has changed, resulting in easier movement around the screen for the user. When data are entered electronically by the school, the data are more accurate because of validation checks built into the application and the elimination of one more data entry step (at the OPI level) that may result in typos or misinterpretation of what has been reported. For those school districts that are unable to submit data electronically, please contact the OPI for additional reporting instructions (see contacts below).

The school district administration is responsible for ensuring that every school within the district has submitted a completed report. A school with no occurrences simply checks the "no incidents" box on the data entry screen and submits the data to the district. The OPI will not consider data to be complete unless the data for every school in the district have been submitted at the district level. Remember, the submittal process will not be available until May 1, 2005.

User names and passwords, for access to the application throughout the 2004-05 school year, were mailed to school district authorized representatives in June 2004. Remember that passwords change every other month.

A live on-line video training will be held on September 29 at 1:30 p.m. This training can be viewed over any computer with access to the Internet through the OPI Web page at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/streamer/livelink/>. If you do not already have QuickTime software on your computer, you will need to download QuickTime to view the video training. Instructions will be provided on the OPI Web site for accessing the video training.

For additional information regarding the application contact Marion Erp (444-1951/ e-mail: merp@state.mt.us) or Pat Reichert (444-4430/ e-mail: preichert@state.mt.us). For assistance with passwords, contact the OPI Help Desk (444-3448).

Health Enhancement and Safety Division

- Coordinated School Health

2004 Kids Count Data

You can order free copies of the recent publication which provides state profiles of child well-being from: Daphne Herling, School of Business Administration, U of M, Missoula MT 59812 or by phone at 243-5614.

Montana School Science Lab Survey

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) is conducting a statewide survey of middle and high schools to collect information on the types of chemicals present in school science labs. Once completed, the survey results will be distributed to Montana schools and other interested parties. Results will be reported on a statewide basis, not school-by-school. The survey will help schools and school districts assess safety risks associated with hazardous, outdated, and unused lab chemicals. MDEQ has also developed a website specific to Montana School Labs. Visit the site at <http://www.mdegschoollabs.com>. The website includes information on common science lab chemicals, resources, and other states with science lab

cleanup programs.

For more information on the survey and website, please visit the website or contact:
Bob Reinke, Hazardous Waste Specialist, MDEQ (406-444-1435; breinke@state.mt.us) OR
Becky Holmes, Hazardous Waste Specialist, MDEQ (406-444-2876; rholfes@state.mt.us)

Practical Information on Crisis Planning Brochure

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools (OSDFS) has published a colorful brochure of checklists for schools and communities in times of crisis. The checklists deal with preventing emergency situations if possible, preparing your school and having a crisis plan in place, responding to an emergency, and the steps involved during the recovery phase after the crisis is over. The brochure will be available through the OSDFS web site: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs

A free copy of a more detailed booklet is available from the U.S. Department of Education's emergency preparedness web site: www.ed.gov/emergencyplan.

2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Registration for the 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey will be underway soon with informational packets being mailed to all district superintendents in September. The contact person for the YRBS is Susan Court at 406-444-3178 or scourt@state.mt.us

- School Nutrition Program

Child Nutrition Program Reauthorization Update

The bill reauthorizing the Child Nutrition Programs was signed by the President and is now Public Law 108-265. Look for updates on the changes that will affect your School Nutrition Programs. For more information: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

New Food Service Managers

School Nutrition Programs provides training for new food service managers. Please notify us when you have a new food service manager so that we may provide prompt technical assistance to answer questions and ensure that program requirements are met. For more information: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

Best Practice

The following four Montana school districts were nominated for Best Practice Awards (2004) from the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for their efforts to provide superior meal programs to children.

- ❖ Browning Public Schools was nominated for a Best Practice Award in the category of reaching needy children in the summer.
- ❖ Vaughn School was nominated for a Best Practice Award in the category of Increasing School Breakfast Program Access.
- ❖ Frazer Public Schools was nominated for a Best Practice Award in the category of Increasing Fruit/Vegetable Consumption.
- ❖ Corvallis School District was nominated for a Best Practice Award in the category of Healthy School Nutrition Environment.

Peer Mentor Network

The Peer Mentor Network is a group of outstanding school food service directors from Montana schools. The purpose of the Peer Consultant Training Network is to provide the opportunity for these trainers to share their expertise with other school food service professionals throughout the state.

The trainers will act as mentors to assist other schools in their efforts to provide healthy meals which meet the USDA regulations in a cost effective manner. Peer Training Consultants can mentor other food service professionals through one-on-one consultations (through site visits, telephone or email) and in group training sessions. A complete explanation of the project is available online at: www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/index.html under the "Fresh Bytes" pull-down menu. To set up a visit or for more information:

Team Nutrition Program
(406) 994-5641

School Nutrition Programs
(406) 444-2501

Administrative/Cost Control Regional Training

Administrative and cost control trainings will be held in Helena on September 8; Missoula on September 15; and Havre and Miles City on September 16. The administrative training will include program requirements, the impact that Child Nutrition reauthorization will have on your school, and common errors found during school food service reviews. The cost control training will provide strategies for a cost-effective foodservice. The administrative training will be offered in the morning and cost control training will be offered in the afternoon. For more information: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

Foodservice Manager Trainings

Foodservice manager trainings provide something for both new and experienced foodservice personnel. Topics include what to expect during a review, requirements for your program, tips and tricks for filling out paperwork, and a chance to exchange ideas with others. Look for more information in September. Regional trainings will be scheduled. For more information: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

- HIV/AIDS/STD Program

Native American AIDS and Substance Abuse Training

The Office of Public Instruction's HIV/AIDS Program will be sponsoring the Native American Prevention Project Against AIDS and Substance Abuse (NAPPASA) training in Helena on October 3, 4, and 5, 2004. The NAPPASA prevention curricula is a research based program that was developed over a period of six years with input from Native American elders, communities, tribes and youth. The curriculum is provided in two levels and has been found appropriate for the age span of youth typically found in the 8th through 10th grades. The registration deadline is September 17. Interested persons can register by contacting Susan Court, HIV/AIDS Education specialist at 406-444-3178 or scourt@state.mt.us.

- Driver Education/Advanced Driver Education

Reimbursements to Schools

Annual payments to schools for traffic education were made to the County Treasurer in latter August. The reimbursement rate was \$83.73 per student completing at least 50 percent of the classroom and 50 percent of the behind-the-wheel instruction. Payment information by district and by county can be viewed at www.opi.state.mt.us/driveded. Several school reimbursement payments were withheld because they have not yet submitted the required year-end report.

Minimum Requirements Reminder

In 2001, through the public rule adoption process, the minimum requirements for driver education programs were changed. Some of the provisions were implemented incrementally. All changes are now fully in force. The required 60 hours of structured learning activities that include no less than 6 hours of in-traffic behind-the-wheel instruction must be over no less than 25 student-contact days for each student enrolled; the six hours of behind-the-wheel training must be provided over no less than six days, which can be a part of the 25 minimum days. These standards apply to each student individually, not the program schedule generally. Unless extra days and hours are built into the schedule, days and hours must be made up by absent students. If this is not done, the student has not completed an approved program and does not qualify for license before age 16.

LAWS Website Available for the 2005 Legislative Session

The Legislative Services Division of the Montana Legislative Branch has activated the Legislative Automated Workflow System (LAWS) website for the upcoming 2005 legislative session. LAWS is an up-to-the-minute database application used for updating and tracking bill status. The web interface portion of LAWS provides public access to bill status, bill text, various reports, and other legislative information. It contains detailed information on all bills and bill drafts prior to, during, and after the Montana legislative session. During a legislative session, floor agendas, journals, and floor action summaries for both the house and senate chambers are available from LAWS. Committee hearing schedules are also available during the session. You can use <http://leg.state.mt.us/session.htm> to go to the 2005 main session page and link to LAWS from there, or you can go directly to LAWS using <http://leg.state.mt.us/laws.htm>. Contact: Jim Gordon, LAWS Webmaster, 444-2493, lawswebmaster@state.mt.us.

America's Legislators Back to School Week

September 20 – 24, 2004

During September 20 through 24, Montana legislators will be joining their counterparts throughout the nation by participating in America's Legislators Back to School Week. This program gives legislators in all 50 states the opportunity to meet personally with their young constituents and to answer questions, share ideas, listen to concerns, and impart a greater understanding of the legislative processes necessary for developing effective public policy.

Sponsored by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the program is designed to teach young people -- the nation's future voters and leaders -- what it's like to be a state legislator: the processes, the pressures, and the debate, negotiation and compromise that are the very fabric of representative democracy. It also focuses state legislators on civic education during the same week all across the country, building personal links between schools and legislators and providing legislators an opportunity to observe what is going on in schools.

NCSL has prepared resource materials for legislators including suggestions for age- appropriate activities with students. Follow-up materials produced for teachers to use in the classroom include a student booklet and video titled *Your Ideas Count*. Additional information for principals and teachers, including a teacher's guide and lesson plans, can be found at <http://www.ncsl.org/public/trust/teachers.htm>.

Legislators will be contacting principals and teachers in their districts in late August and early September to arrange classroom visits with interested educators during the week of September 20. If this week is not convenient, legislators are encouraged to schedule a visit for another time that works better. For more information about this program, contact Legislative Services

Division staff: Krista Lee Evans at (406) 444-3957, kevans@state.mt.us or Lois Menzies at (406) 444-3066, lomenzies@state.mt.us.

Energy Efficient School Buildings

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality offers two programs to help school districts resolve high-energy use and performance issues in existing school buildings. Both programs help building owners to prioritize and plan to make wise investments in energy efficiency for their buildings. The Preliminary Building Assessment (PBA) is a structured facility energy study designed to identify and document energy efficiency opportunities for public schools. The purpose of a PBA is to provide the building owner with important information regarding the energy efficiency, operating conditions, and physical condition of the building. Retro-commissioning is a systematic and documented process of ensuring that the building operational needs are met, building systems perform efficiently, and operators are provided training. According to the retro-commissioning project at the East Helena schools, they may save as much as \$15,000 in annual energy savings for a one time investment of \$8,700. There are many other success stories but not enough time to share. The first (free) step for each program is to supply DEQ with basic information about your school so they can calculate an Energy Use Index (EUI) to see if there may be potential for energy savings compared to other schools. Based on the EUI calculation DEQ may do a walk-through audit and may be able to provide partial funding (limited funding) towards a PBA or retro-commissioning project. Contact at the Department of Environmental Quality:

Toby Benson
Montana Rebuild Program Manager
P.O. Box 20091
Helena, MT 59620-0901
Phone: 841-5231
E-mail: tbenson@state.mt.us

Energize Montana www.deq.state.mt.us/energy
Commissioning of Buildings & Montana Rebuild
<http://www.deq.state.mt.us/energy/buildings/index.asp>
Rebuild America www.rebuild.org
Betterbricks (Northwest Energy Alliance) www.betterbricks.com
Energy Service Corp www.escperform.org
Energy Smart Schools www.eren.doe.gov/energysmartschools/
Utility Bill Monitoring \$66/yr www.avistaadvantage.com